

**Town of North Hempstead**  
**My Brother's Keeper**  
**Local Action Plan**  
**May 2015**

## **BACKGROUND**

### **MY BROTHER'S KEEPER CHALLENGE**

In February 2014, President Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps facing boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. The "My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge" seeks to inspire community leaders, and encourage their commitment to ensuring all young people can succeed. (more information can be found at <http://www.mbkchallenge.org>).

The My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge encourages communities to convene leaders, identify effective strategies, and work together toward achieving two or three of these six goals:

1. Ensuring all children enter school cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally ready;
2. Ensuring all children read at grade level by third grade;
- 3. Ensuring all youth graduate from high school;**
- 4. Ensuring all youth complete post-secondary education or training;**
- 5. Ensuring all youth out of school are employed; and**
6. Ensuring all youth remain safe from violent crime.

The Town of North Hempstead is focusing on goals 3-5.

The President believes that local leadership is essential to building partnerships and developing plans of action to ensure a brighter future for all young people. That is why the President has issued the challenge to commit to building "My Brother's Keeper Communities" and implementing a coherent cradle-to-college and career strategy, to ensure that all young people can succeed. This is a nationwide effort in which the Town is participating.

### **THE TOWN OF NORTH HEMPSTEAD**

The Town of North Hempstead occupies 58 square miles. Its western border is roughly 14.5 miles from Manhattan. It is bounded on the north by the Long Island Sound, to the south by the Town of Hempstead, to the west by the borough of Queens, and to the east by the Town of Oyster Bay. Its northern land boundaries are along the Little Neck and Manhasset Bays, and Hempstead Harbor. This suburban community has a population of 222,611. There are 74,587 year-round households. Estimated average household size is 2.84.

There are 11 school districts that are wholly or partially within the geographic boundaries of the Town. Those school districts are completely independent of the Town; they each have their own, separate, locally-elected school boards, their own school administration, their own facilities and they are all governed by New York State law.

## **LOCAL ACTION SUMMIT**

A Local Action Summit was held at Town Hall on November 17, 2014. Prior to that, and in preparation for that Summit, we asked the Council Members (local elected officials representing each of the six approximately equally populated areas of the Town – see Exhibit A) to provide information so that we invited the appropriate parties to participate in this endeavor (Exhibit B). The boards and administration of all school districts were made aware of the Local Action Summit and invited to participate in this endeavor.

At the November 17 Summit, Town Supervisor Judi Bosworth addressed the gathering and explained the Town's commitment to the Challenge. A PowerPoint presentation (Exhibit C) was made to the group of approximately 40 local leaders. The group engaged in a one hour meeting, which included an interactive discussion about essential elements for success of the endeavor. Participants included several schools superintendents and representatives of postsecondary institutions, business community leaders, library representatives, representatives from the Workforce Investment Board, and others. Our area is suburban with limited mass transit, but we invited NICE bus representatives and Long Island Railroad representatives, who attended. We issued a press release and took photographs at the meeting as well. (Exhibit D) The group concluded that we would be more productive in smaller groups. We discussed smaller areas for discussion and development, such as: institutions that can identify young people who could benefit from the effort, mentoring resources, and resources that already exist for young people seeking opportunity, including the WIB and libraries. We emailed the PowerPoint to all participants.

## **GROUP MEETINGS**

Subsequent to the Local Action Summit, we had smaller group meetings throughout the winter and participated in multiple webinars sponsored by the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. After our focused meetings with various groups, including organizations that provide internships for students, schools and mentoring groups, we invited several key leaders to a meeting at Town Hall on March 25th.

At that meeting, we presented a possible action plan (Exhibit E) to the attendees, who we determined to be the "core group" of leaders who have shown consistent interest in My Brother's Keeper and had something to contribute to the effort (Exhibit F). We decided that the initiative must include both a very strong mentoring component to guide students to areas of study and work in which they showed interest, encourage them in their scholastic endeavors and ultimately help them in choosing and applying for post-secondary options. In addition, we decided it was essential to have a well-structured summer internship program which would

serve two functions: first, it would expose students to a wide variety of job possibilities and second, it would give them important workplace experience.

We would include the two school districts that had expressed a strong interest in participating, and who continued to attend our discussions: the Westbury UFSD and the Manhasset UFSD. Both the Director of Guidance for the Westbury School District, Ms. Deadra Faulkner, and the Director of Guidance for the Manhasset School District, Ms. Jane Grappone, attended (as did the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for Manhasset Schools, Dr. Charles Leone). Andre Vanterpool and his colleagues from the Manhasset-Great Neck EOC also were there.

Based on the interest of the Westbury guidance counsellor and the Manhasset administrators in concert with the EOC representatives, it was determined that we would begin the initiative with those two school districts. By *piloting* a program (no more than 5-10 students from either district) we felt that we would be better able to configure a program that could succeed for the students participating. In addition, two representatives from the Mentoring Partnership of Long Island (MPLI), Jean Cohen and John Hershey, attended and agreed to serve as a resource to the Town in recruiting, screening, training, matching and monitoring and supporting our mentors, following the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring. (Exhibit G) Based on their input, it was determined that we would need to find mentors with a real commitment to the program, and that it would be most useful to begin with 9<sup>th</sup> graders with whom the mentors would agree to meet for the four years of high school.

Town Commissioners from our Human Resources Department and Department of Services for the Aging (DOSA)/Community Services as well as the Supervisor's Chief of Staff and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs also participated. The plan developed from that meeting as well as a meeting the next day with the Long Island Mentoring Partnership representatives.

**LOCAL DATA** (based on data from NYSED for 2013-2014 <http://data.nysed.gov/enrollment>)

Manhasset:

7% of students are Black/African-American or Hispanic/Latino

5% are economically disadvantaged

High annual attendance rate (97%) and low (0%) student suspensions

94% of high school completers go to 4 year colleges and 4% go to 2-year colleges

The graduation rate is 97% for all students, but the number of Black/African-American members of the cohort is 9 and the number of Hispanic/Latino members of the cohort totals 11

and NYSED does not report percentages when there are fewer than 30 students in the cohort. However, according to Dr. Charles Leone, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, 2 of the 11 Hispanic/Latino students (82%) did not graduate and 100% of the Black/African-American students graduated.

#### Westbury:

96% of students are Black/African-American or Hispanic/Latino

98% are economically disadvantaged

High annual attendance rate (96%) and some (15%) student suspensions

46% of high school completers go to 4 year colleges and 43% go to 2-year colleges

The graduation rate is 83% for all students; the percentage for Black/African-American members of the cohort is 89% and the percentage for Hispanic/Latino members of the cohort is 77%.

#### Unemployment Rates:

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey, total unemployment in the Town of North Hempstead is 5.3% for ages 16 and over.

For those aged 16-19, the rate is 9.1%; for those aged 20-24, the rate is 7.9%

For all Black or African-American individuals, the rate is 7.1%

For all Hispanic or Latino origin, the rate is 4.3%

For all individuals with less than a high school diploma, the rate is 10.1%

For all individuals with a high school diploma and no post-secondary study, the rate is 8.1%

#### **RESOURCES**

In order to move forward with our goal of ensuring all young people have the ability to reach their full potential, the Town will dedicate the following resources to the effort:

Supervisor's staff to coordinate with MPLI all Town Staff and school/EOC personnel

Town facilities in which to hold mentoring sessions after school weekly: Yes We Can Community Center in Westbury, Town Hall in Manhasset.

Commissioner of DOSA/Community Services to work with mentors

Commissioner of Human Resources to coordinate internship program

Additional resources:

School guidance directors and Manhasset-Great Neck EOC

MPLI (through OJJDP funding stream which allows MPLI to get some reimbursement for their time spent on the MBK project)

Committed, dedicated, available mentors from both local communities of Manhasset and Westbury.

Local businesses to supply food for the students after school

## **THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN**

### **STEP ONE:** Identify a leadership organization

The leadership organization will be the Town. The group that will take responsibility for moving the work forward will be the Supervisor, Chief of Staff, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Commissioner of Finance/Human Resources, Commissioner of DOSA/Community Services. This core group will work in concert with the MPLI, mentor volunteers, the Westbury and Manhasset School Districts and the Manhasset-Great Neck EOC, and the Commissioners of the Town of North Hempstead.

### **STEP TWO:** Broaden Constituencies

Outside organizations include the school districts and EOC, the MPLI and volunteer mentors, and, after proven success, local businesses who can participate in the internship program as the program grows in the future.

### **STEP THREE:** Establish infrastructure

The Town will serve as the anchor of the program. The MPLI will provide advice, counsel and help in recruiting, screening, training, matching and monitoring and supporting our mentors.

### **CURRICULUM**

The curriculum, *Discovering the Possibilities* (Exhibit H) will be used to ensure the program continues to target our three goals of ensuring all youth graduate from high school, ensuring all youth complete post-secondary education or training and ensuring all youth out of school are employed. Experts believe that instilling the value of college and career skills planning at an early age can help young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, prepare for and achieve their educational goals. Ninth grade represents a unique opportunity to engage young people in discussions concerning their futures. Research suggests that the transition to

high school has dramatic consequences for a young person's educational and economic future. The Discovering the Possibilities curriculum was developed to help mentors navigate this critical time period with their mentees. The activities in the curriculum will give the mentees the opportunity to explore a wide range of possibilities for the future with their mentor as their guide.

#### *SPEAKER SERIES*

In addition to this curriculum and the work the mentors will do with their mentees, the Town will create a speakers series. We will ask Commissioners and heads of various departments in the Town (Communications, IT, Town Attorney, Comptroller, Department of Services for the Aging (DOSA), Human Resources, 311 Call Center, Highway and Parks Departments, Public Safety, Animal Shelter, Administrative Services, Solid Waste Management, Planning, Buildings, Department of Public Works and the like) to speak to the students as a group about what their job (and the jobs of those who work for them) entail in order to expose the students to real career options and allow them to ask questions about what it is like to perform those jobs. We would ask MPLI to train the speakers as mentor so that they will relate properly with the mentees. We would hope to expand this component of the program outside Town employees in future years, but it is likely that the first year there will be enough different types of jobs with a wide variety of educational requirements for the students to hear about just from Town staff.

#### *INTERNSHIPS*

The culminating event at the end of the school year will be the opportunity to work at a paid internship in the Town in one (or possibly two) of the Town's departments. MPLI will have trained the Commissioners before they speak to the mentees so they would have the tools to work with the interns as their mentors as well as their jobs. That said, the students would continue to work with their mentors during their internships. Some of the goals of the internships would be: learning to be on time and to follow rules and regulations in the workforce, proper grooming/dress for the workplace, learning what type of work interests them/what career path they want to follow, exposure to others who have graduated from college and have had success in the workplace.

#### *GROWTH*

In March of our first year (March 2016), we will meet to determine next steps. The Town will either add another class of 9<sup>th</sup> graders in the fall or wait another year before adding more students. This will be determined by interest among potential mentors and mentees, participant feedback and resources. If the program needs to be retooled based on mentor/mentee feedback, that would mitigate against adding more students in the fall. If there is a great deal of interest in the program, we would attempt to grow it sooner.

#### **STEP FOUR: Target and Concentrate Resources**

As stated above, the Town has selected two school districts in which to initiate the program, one with a very large economically disadvantaged population and the other with a small but geographically concentrated economically disadvantaged population (Exhibit I). There are

Town facilities and staff in each of these two areas of the Town, which will make serving the population in their own areas much less complicated. The two school districts, as well as MPLI are also willing to devote resources to the effort.

#### **STEP FIVE: Develop an Implementation Strategy**

##### **TIMELINE:**

##### **Summer 2015:**

- Work with DOSA, Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, other groups and MPLI to solicit appropriate mentor volunteers. MPLI will help us to screen and select mentors as well as train them using Town and MPLI resources.
- Once the number of mentors has been determined, contact school districts/EOC and request that they select mentee candidates. MPLI and schools will assist in obtaining all necessary parental approvals.

##### **Fall 2015:**

- Begin mentoring programs in Westbury and Manhasset
- Use Yes We Can and Town Hall (or EOC if transportation poses any problem) as sites for mentors to meet with mentees
- Develop speaker series. Working with MPLI to train staff
- Ensure 2016 budget contains sufficient funding for summer internship program (intern salaries, meals for interns)

##### **March 2016:**

- Perform preliminary evaluation of mentorship program; evaluate Town staffing levels for program
- Develop internship program based on interests of students
- Secure working papers for students aged 14-15
- Determine course for Fall 2016 – if adding more mentees, secure and train more mentors
- Determine whether speakers series can continue for summer interns or whether another series should be developed for the summer (Study skills? Organization and time management skills? College process? Writing workshop?)

##### **Summer 2016:**

- Implement 6- or 8- week internship program for students 16+ or with working papers
- Continue speaker series/ other series – bring interns together as a group at least once per week
- Continue mentorship over summer, adding supervisor as trained mentor

##### **Fall 2016:**

- Add another group of 9<sup>th</sup> graders? Wait until next Fall?

##### **2016 and beyond:**

- For all groups, in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, begin discussions and preparation for standardized tests (PSAT, SAT, ACT).

- Seek funding/work with local test prep groups to secure test preparation for mentees.
- Mentors will assist in completing FAFSA and other forms to help finance higher education
- Engage in college exploration with students; arrange field trips to local universities to tour and experience campus life.
- Perhaps ask local young alumni from different schools to come and speak about a particular aspect of the college experience.
- Make sure students are aware of opportunities at their schools and local libraries to gain information about the college process.
- Explore part-time jobs if time allows after school for students in Junior and Senior Year of high school